

INSIDE TRACKS

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An interview with Governor Stan Stephens

Hunting: A Heritage Worth Preserving

From July 16-18 Governor Stephens will host the first-ever national Symposium on hunting heritage. We asked the Governor about the Symposium and its significance to Montana.

Editor:

How will the July 16-18 Governor's Symposium on Hunting Heritage help ensure that hunting remains a part of the tradition and culture of Montana and the nation?



Editor: Why is it that Montana has stepped forward and taken the lead nationally on this issue?

Governor Stephens: The anti-hunting lobby has been running loose in the national press and much of what they have had to say has been inflammatory and incorrect. Montana, with our re-

markable tradition and culture for hunting, is the logical state to respond to these statements.

America needs to hear "the rest of the story," and we have within our state the qualified voices who are capable of speaking out on this important subject. (continued on p. 3)

The Governor's Symposium on North America's Hunting Heritage



Purpose: North America's conservation movement emerged to preserve and restore wildlife. Yet, in spite of impressive accomplishments, persistent criticism challenges the basic idea of hunting and wildlife management.

The Symposium will promote a renewed understanding of hunting and wildlife management, and show how hunting was and remains an inseparable part of wildlife conservation.

Objectives:

- Promote the history of hunters as conservationists
- Broaden public understanding of hunting
- Examine the concerns of people opposed to hunting
- Discuss current issues that can influence the future of hunting
- Rebuild positive conservation coalitions
- Work together for the future survival of North America's hunting heritage

Where and when: The Sympo-

sium will be held in Bozeman, Montana, on the MSU campus from July 16-18, 1992.

Registration: The fee of \$50 includes registration, program materials, paper abstracts, refreshments, one lunch and a barbecue dinner. Call Montana State University at 406-994-3323.

Program: The three-day program includes speakers from all over the United States. Speakers include: Governor Stephens; Jay Hair, President of the National Wildlife Federation; Michael Hayden, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior; and Lonnie Williamson, President of the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

Also speaking will be Peter Duncan, President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; K.L. Cool, Director of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and many more experts from a variety of fields.

On the final day, group sessions will focus on finding solutions and a call to action.

Please plan on attending this landmark event! ☺

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John McBride Helps Pass On the Tradition

Over 1,000 volunteer instructors teach ethics, gun and bow handling, and safety to 6,000 youth and adults in Montana's Hunter Education Program. John McBride has taught the course since it began in 1958. Over the years about 700 students have passed through his course and learned to be responsible hunters—hunters who are safe, law abiding and ethical. Few people have done more than McBride to preserve our hunting heritage.

Basics Much the Same

"We were all feeling our way along when the program first started in the 50s," said John McBride, who lives along Libby Creek near Libby. "The course was a lot looser then, but the basics were very much the same as they are now."

McBride got involved with the program partly because of what he saw as a lack of attention to safety by many hunters. "It's a matter of self defense, really; I like to go into the woods with someone who's safe."

McBride credits his father for stimulating his interest in hunting and shooting. "My father's shotgun was at my disposal any time I wanted it," he said. "He was very patient with me. I found out that if he gave advice it was usually good advice."

The outdoors has been a way of life for McBride. He graduated in forestry from the University of Maine in 1952. While a student he worked as a lookout and on trail maintenance in Montana in 1949 and 1950. One of his projects was helping to build the swinging bridge at Kootenai Falls. After graduation, he entered the forestry profession and has been in it ever since. He worked for O'Neil Lumber, which became St. Regis Paper, which became Champion International, from 1952 through 1990. He now does contract forestry work. He is intensely proud of his profession and the work he has done.

Nature Can Be Wonderful Ally

"I love forestry," he said. "You work outside, and the variety is endless. I feel we provide a service to mankind. And you adapt your activities as you listen to nature. When you work with nature it can be a wonderful ally."

McBride team-teaches his course with his wife, Carolyn. He had taught for a number of years, and Carolyn began to tire of being apart for so many evenings. "She told me she thought she could teach the course too," said McBride. "So I gave her the test, and she missed only three, even though she hadn't



had the course yet. So I said, 'Why don't you teach?'

Good Way of Being Together

"Carolyn observed the first year, then in the later 1960s began to teach with me full time. She's been at it ever since. It works great. We swap off, and she watches what I'm teaching and tells me what I've missed. She teaches certain parts like ethics, regulations, and assists with gun handling. It's good way of being together."

The couple met in Maine where they both attended the University. "I was late for supper, out shooting all day," said McBride. "I decided to go to the spaghetti feed at the Maine Outing Club. I remember walking in there in my shooting clothes, with my pockets all stuffed with ammo. We sat at the same table. I thought she was interesting right away; she thought I was interesting, too. We really hit it off, and I was very pleased because I cut her out of an engineer I didn't like."

Weapons handling and safety are McBride's favorite parts of the Hunter Education Course. He served in the army as a rifleman and machine-gunner and has extensive experience in firearms handling and collecting. "I look at the way my students handle the weapons," said McBride. "That's an infallible way of telling how much experience they've had and how well they are learning the principles of the course."

Even with the radical changes in society, McBride feels that the kids in his classes haven't changed much over the years. "The percentage of girls is about the same—30 or percent," he said. "The girls have usually been easier to teach than the boys; they don't have to unlearn bad habits. And there are always one or two kids each year that astonish you on how much they know."

Better If Parents Help

Many kids in his classes had no prior experience. "Some of the kids are handling guns for the first time, and that is scary to think they'll be turned loose with 16 hours of instruction," he said. "But, on the other hand, that's more than I had. It's much better if the parents help, but if the student pays attention in class, I feel that he or she can hunt safely."

What was one of his most positive experiences in teaching the course? McBride cites the case of a repeat student. "One kid took it three times before he finally passed it," he said. "He had all the good will in the world, but just couldn't focus when it came test time. He came back a fourth time because he liked it."

The inspiration for McBride's long service is a mix of his love of the outdoors, the influence of his father, wife, and children, plus a chance to continue learning. "I'm a hunter, my father hunted, my children hunt. There's a lot to know about hunting safety, and when I got into it, I found out a lot my father didn't teach me. I want to pass that on."

"I'm not sure how much longer I'll teach—as long as I can, I guess. I want to put in at least 40, that's five more years. I put in 38 years in forestry and always thought about 40. So, I'll teach 40, I reckon." ■

Hundreds of Kids Caught Hundreds of Rainbow Trout

Kids' Fishing Day a Success

As part of National Fishing Week, a kids' fishing day was held at McGilvray Lake near Bigfork on June 6.

The event was sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Creston National Fish Hatchery), American Legion Post 86 of Bigfork, and American Legion Post 108 of Whitefish, with assistance from the U.S. Forest Service and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The event was held at the Grizzly Base Boy Scout Camp, and scouts assisted during the day-long activities.

Hundreds of kids caught hundreds of rainbow trout averaging about two

pounds. The fish were stocked by the Creston National Fish Hatchery.

"It was a fun, family day," said Dave Bermel, hatchery representative and chief organizer. "It's a great way to get kids interested in fishing."

Many kids at the event caught their

first trout, and some caught their first fish. Some parents and kids had never fished, but some of these kids were still able to catch a fish or two.

"This may be one of the best possible uses for excess brood hatchery fish," noted Bermel.



FISHING WAS GREAT! These young anglers display the rainbow trout they caught on Kids' Fishing Day at McGilvray Lake near Bigfork. The event was a success for kids and their families. Some youngsters even caught their first fish.

Gov. Stevens Interview (cont.)

Editor: How important is the hunting heritage/anti-hunting issue?

Governor Stephens: The issue is extremely important to Montana and the nation. We cannot sit idly by and permit the anti-hunting lobby to incorrectly portray the role of the hunter and the value of hunting in wildlife management.

Editor: Will this symposium be repeated next year?

Governor Stevens: It is our intention that the Governor's Symposium on Hunting Heritage will become an annual event. I intend to discuss this matter with governors of other states in the west who share Montana's view.

Editor: Who should attend the Symposium?

Governor Stephens: All are most welcome to attend. We anticipate a large turnout from Montana and across the nation.

Editor: Besides attending the Symposium, what else can Montanans do to help preserve our hunting heritage?

Governor Stephens: A high percentage of Montanans and Americans do not participate in hunting. Through our numerous wildlife and hunting organizations we need to inform the public concerning the true nature of hunting and the responsible role it plays in wildlife management.

Want to take a kid fishing? Keep these points in mind

- Keep your fishing trip short
- Choose fish that can easily be caught, like sunfish
- Push-button reels and bobbers make it easier for kids to catch fish
- Concentrate on helping the child fish, rather than fishing yourself
- Plan related activities, such as looking for aquatic insects or picnicking
- Keep it simple; make it fun

(adapted from Outdoor Life magazine)

Fisheries Improvements Underway

Department biologists are moving forward with various fisheries improvements in Hungry Horse Reservoir and its tributaries. These actions are designed to increase the westslope cutthroat trout fishery in the reservoir.

Young cutthroat trout are being planted in Felix, Harris, and Clark creeks to establish spawning runs. Biologists plant about 1,000 fish in each creek annually hoping that the young fish will migrate to the reservoir, mature, then return to the creek to spawn.

"Felix and Harris creeks are now blocked to fish migration because of culverts," noted Brian Marotz, the Department's Fisheries Program Officer in Kalispell.

"We are negotiating with the U.S Forest Service and the Bureau of Reclamation to replace those culverts so that returning cutthroat trout can access these streams."

Marotz noted that the fish plants, which have been made for several years, have increased fish numbers in the creeks. Also, traps placed near the creek mouths have captured downstream

migrating trout which carry chemical marks identifying them as trout planted in previous years.

Other measures to boost the reservoir fishery include plantings of willows and grass along the drawdown zone to create habitat for young fish, and bundles of trees sunk in the reservoir to create habitat for fish and aquatic insects.

The improvements at Hungry Horse are part of the overall Fisheries Mitigation Program for the Flathead System, funded by the Bonneville Power Administration through the Northwest

Power Planning Council.

The program also includes hatchery plants of fish, habitat improvements in the lower Flathead system, installation of a water temperature control device on Hungry Horse Dam, and a fish monitoring program.

Some smaller lakes, like Lion Lake, will be rehabilitated and planted with fish to increase fishing opportunity. The Department, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are cooperators in the mitigation effort. ☺



CHECKING THE FISH TRAP. Fisheries worker Gary Michael checks the trap just above the culvert on Felix Creek.

Negotiating to replace the culverts so that westslope cutthroat trout can access streams is one of the actions being taken to increase the trout fishery in Hungry Horse Reservoir.

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